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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FARM SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

PRELIMINARY REPORT
ON
FARM LABOR SUPPLY AND POLICIES
IN CONNECTICUT

PREPARED BY
HAROLD LIEB
LABOR DIVISION

June, 1941

May 5, 1947

MEMORANDUM TO DR. B. M. MAY SILVERMASTER
Director, Labor Division

Subject: Farm Labor Shortage Problem in Connecticut

Dear Dr. Silvermaster:

Early in April, Mr. Payson Irwin, Regional Director in Region I, forwarded to this office a copy of a statement which he had received from persons in Connecticut concerned about the problem of an adequate supply of farm labor for the coming cropping season in the state as a whole and in Hartford County in particular. This statement, under the head of "Recommendations of the Connecticut Sub-Committee on Farm Labor Submitted to the State Agricultural Planning Committee" and over the signatures of Thomas J. Graham, Chairman of the State Sub-Committee on Farm Labor, and of Raymond E. Clapp, Chairman of the State Agricultural Planning Committee, read as follows:

> "A farm labor survey in Hartford County indicates that there will be a shortage of at least 3,000 farm workers this coming summer (June to September). To meet this need we are attempting to secure the services of high school and college boys or migrant labor. Housing this labor presents a pressing problem.
>
> It is recommended that C.C.C. camps in the area be made available for farm work for farm labor. It is understood that Camp Cannon in Tolland County (in the northwestern part of Tolland County) will be discontinued during the early summer, but not soon enough to alleviate the crisis. Arrangements be made by shifting C.C.C. personnel so that camp could be made available on or before June first.
>
> Camp Robinson in East Hartland, (northwestern part of Hartford County) due in location, is also needed in order to meet needs of housing farm labor. Would it be possible to shift personnel to other camps such as Bailey in Madison (township in the southeastern part of New Haven County) or Camp Orme in Cornwall (township in the northwestern part of Litchfield County) which are being closed on April first or to consolidate personnel in other camps still remaining open. There is a C.C.C. camp in Reading Hill, Massachusetts, that has been discontinued. We would like to cooperate with Massachusetts in order

this need for housing of farm labor which would be used in both Massachusetts and Connecticut.

We recommend that the Farm Security Administration furnish a manager and a health clinic for each such labor camp in Connecticut and that it make any repairs or improvements that are necessary for the operation of the camps.

It appears that the housing of seasonal farm labor can be handled in Connecticut at a minimum or none if the above recommendations are carried out."

In accordance with the request of the Regional Director in Region I, the committee was detailed (a) to investigate the validity of the claim that a farm labor shortage was imminent in the area in question, (b) to consider the reliability of the findings of the aforementioned farm labor survey pertaining to this eventuality, and (c) to evaluate the advisability of the recommendations proposed to meet the alleged difficulty. During April 5 and April 16, some interviews and informal persons in and related affairs in Connecticut were conducted with and interviewed in an effort to obtain a clear picture of the situation. 1/

1/ The following persons and individuals were met:

Sub-Committee on Farm Labor of the State Agricultural Planning Committee and of the State Agricultural Defense Council: [illegible], chairman of committee, Extension growers and certain officials in cooperative agricultural marketing; F. L. Pelton, secretary of committee, extension economist at the University of Connecticut, in charge of the farm labor survey conducted under the sponsorship of the State Agricultural Planning Committee and of the State Agricultural Defense Council; S.E. Brownell, leader of committee. State extension leader in agricultural economics.

Members of the State Agricultural Defense Council: [illegible], chairman of the Council, Dairy and Tobacco Farmer, and president of the State Farm Bureau; D. Clarke, dairy and poultry farmer, and secretary of the State Farm Bureau; Thomas [illegible], director of State Employment Service; State Commissioner of Agriculture F. H. Hodgkins; [illegible] of College of Agriculture, University of Connecticut; State County Leaders; county extension agent from Litchfield County; and a number of farmers.

William L. Harris Jr., agricultural extension agent, Hartford County and Frank, FSA CE Supervisor, Hartford County [illegible], and local

Conclusions and Approach

No conclusive evidence has been established, so far at least as this survey has been able to gather, to demonstrate beyond a doubt that local and non-local laborers who in past years had been available for regular and seasonal work on farms in the state as a whole and in the Connecticut River Valley of the state in particular will not be available in sufficient numbers adequate to meet the labor requirements of farm operators for the coming 1961 cropping season. In view of this observation, however, the conclusion that such an assumption is entirely unwarranted is to place an unwarranted confidence in our ability to predict or measure with any degree of accuracy that the labor supply situation will be in the agricultural realm which lies ahead. Lack of complete factual information at this time, and the absence of fine techniques to measure labor shortages before they occur preclude the possibilities of assembling conclusive evidence as a basis for such prediction.

It must be stated and understood, therefore, that the farm labor survey conducted by the Connecticut sub-committee on farm labor did not reveal, as alleged, "that there will be a shortage of at least 2000 farm workers (in the shade-tobacco harvest) this coming season" in Hartford County. This estimate is completely divorced from the fact

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(Footnote 1 - page 3 - cont'd) Miss Tertia, industrial inspector, State Department of Labor and Factory Inspection; Arthur Deane, tobacco farm placement supervisor, State Employment Service; Bill [illegible], supervisor of field operations, State Employment Service; John [illegible], in charge of out-of-state farm labor recruitment for the Connecticut Shade Tobacco Growers Association during the last [illegible] years.

Donald Tidwell, farm manager for the consolidated Cigar Corporation at Windsor, Connecticut; Mr. Driscoll, farm foreman for the Cooperat' Wrapper plantation located near Deerfield, Connecticut; Walter Edwards, in charge of recruiting operations for the Windsor Shade Tobacco Company, Hartford, Conn.; Oliver Tyrell, shade tobacco grower, South Windsor, Conn.; Emil Valaitis, shadow tobacco and potato grower, Windsorville, Conn.; E. Fuller, partner, Griffin-Fuller Seed Company, Hartford; a representative of the American Sumatra Tobacco Corporation, East Hartford; R. Bishop, fruit farmer; L. J. Brooker, leader of State 4-H Clubs; Julian Schweizer, Extension specialist of the Connecticut Dairymen's Association; Albert Cole, [illegible] and chairman of the Litchfield County Farm Bureau Policy Committee.

of the survey, having no basis in established fact. It is merely a round figure based on an arbitrary assumption that one-third of the seasonal farm workers employed in the state tobacco harvest in 1940 will probably be unavailable in 1941. With no pretension of statistical accuracy, it has been similarly estimated that out-of-state tobacco growers in the state will be short about 1000 harvest laborers, fruit growers, about 1000 workers, vegetable farmers, about 2000 workers, and dairy farmers, about 400 workers--or a total of about 30,000 seasonal farm laborers. No criticism of these estimates is intended but it should be understood that the basis of these generalizations is tenuous. They have been elicited and are merely submitted for the sole purpose of illustrating the approximate magnitudes of the deficiency in the seasonal farm labor supply which are expected to materialize. The limitation of these statistical estimates to over-nicely accurate quantities is obvious, but to strip them of any meaning is to fly in the face of reality.

It may be stated categorically that difficulties of securing seasonal farm laborers in sufficient numbers and of regular experience and skill in the various agricultural regions of Connecticut are likely being felt and may be expected to grow in June, July, and August, at the peak of tobacco.

In the absence of more complete and exact data for predictions of this year's farm labor shortages, other plausible avenues of approach were taken to arrive at the above conclusion. First, the data collected by the State sub-committee on farm labor through its survey were analyzed; secondly, a number of farm employers of labor and public officials intimately familiar with farm labor problems were interviewed; and, lastly, the scope of industrial activities associated with the national defense program was correlated with a view to determining the possible effect of these activities on the previously available local farm labor supply.

Findings of the Farm-Labor Survey of the Connecticut Sub-Committee on Farm Labor. 1/

In March of this year this group conducted a state-wide farm-labor survey on a sample basis for the purpose of determining the farm labor

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1/ Two agricultural groups in the state have currently concerned themselves with the farm-labor shortage problem: the committee on farm labor of the Connecticut Agricultural Defense Council and the sub-committee on farm labor of the State Agricultural Planning Committee. The personnel of the two committees are practically identical and to all intents and purposes one be considered as one.

[illegible] situation in the leading agricultural region in the light of the heightened industrial-defense production program. A questionnaire, a copy of which is attached to this memorandum, was used as an instrument to obtain the data. Three sets of answered questionnaires were returned: (a) 484 replies from row-crops farmers, including corn, cotton, fruit and vegetable farmers; (b) 18 whole holdings from representing also large corporative growers, and (c) 37 farmers whose major crop was sun-grown (or out-door grown) tobacco. 1/

The first group of farmers reported that of the 680 full-time regular farm workers whom they employed in 1940, 200, or slightly over one-third, had left their jobs for work in factories or had been induction-army trained as a result of the Selective Service Act. 2/ These figures lose much of their value as the findings do not reveal the number of that workers who were replaced. The percentage lost thus is probably somewhat less than one-third since 119 farmers of the [illegible] who had experienced such losses were successful in obtaining replacements, either in whole or in part. To counterbalance the salutary effect of these replacements, however, it was found that some 100 of these regular farm employees, or almost 15 per cent of the total employed in 1940, were dissatisfied with the full-time service or class I registrants who are subject to army call as soon as their records are reached.

This group of farmers reported also that they were in need of about [illegible] regular men at the time of the survey (middle of March) and hoped for an additional 1,000 seasonal workers later in the season. The latter

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1/ The method used to conduct the survey left much to be desired from a scientific point of view. No instructions accompanied the questionnaires, and the enumerators where employed, were not trained. [illegible] of the questionnaires were handled through the mail, while others were filled out by county agents or members of the local Rice [illegible] who interviewed the informants.

A substantial number of the returns were only partially complete, while others were neither uniform nor consistent. Their information is too data however lessened the value of the findings.

2/ Over 75 per cent of the losses found jobs in industry.

figure, it was noted, is about 300 seasonal part-time workers less than they employed in 1940. To what extent their remaining in labor reminiscence is a conscious adaptation to an alleged shortage in the available local supply of farm laborers and to what extent it can be explained as a error in estimating 1941 needs is, of course, difficult to say without further information.

Tabulation of the statistical information received from 12 shade tobacco farms representing nine large corporative growers shows that in 1940 they employed on 3800 acres about 950 regular year-round workers and some 6,500 extra seasonal workers between July 15 and September 1. These growers reported that of the 950 regular workers employed that year, they had lost 118 to industry and 20 through the operations of the Selective Service Act, or about 50 per cent of this help. In this as in the fruit case, no information is available of how much of this loss was replaced. The large majority of the farm laborers employed on these farms, however, are seasonal hands, and the major concern of the shade tobacco growers is, therefore, with the present availability of this type of labor. And this is the question for which the survey attempts to answer. The 12 farms, it should be noted, employed on an average about 500 extra seasonal workers per farm in 1940, and together hired from 60 to 70 per cent of the total labor employed by all shade tobacco growers in the Connecticut Valley of the state.

Despite assured help in figures about major crops and corporate labor, the fact is that in 1940 they employed 21 regular farm hands and 118 extra seasonal workers, or, on the average, about three regular and nine seasonal workers per farm. No information is available showing the seasonal labor losses, and indeed could not be ascertained before the commencement of the season; that with respect to regular workers included a loss of almost one-third.

Will it now be agreed upon that the survey established no conclusive grounds for judging the issue of farm labor shortage, if there be any, as a current existence of a moderate problem—at least as far as the supply of regular farm workers is concerned. No relief to the problem is provided by the survey with regard to the forthcoming seasonal labor situation, the major item of apprehension. It is reasonable to believe that the same forces affecting the regular farm labor supply will take themselves out in the seasonal variety of farm laborers. If this proves true, the labor shortage of these workers will be even larger and more acute. Migration of rural workers into higher-paying and steadier defense jobs and the possible adaptation to use inexperienced workers, and hence larger numbers, are the major factors governing this conclusion.

As partial, but concrete evidence of a tightened farm labor market, the FSA County Supervisor in Hartford County revealed that applications for loans to be used for hiring labor this agricultural season show larger sums requested for this item than last year, largely because they are being estimated on a daily-wage basis of $3.50 as compared with $2.50 in 1940. According to the same source, FSA clients who in previous years hired out to other farms as activity became slack on their own are being drawn off by the local factories, plants, and mills, probably with defense orders. Public road construction in the county is also absorbing a number of workers who otherwise would seek farm employment. In addition, it has been observed that a number of farmers have lost their sons and regular farm hands either to defense industries or to the Army through the operation of the Selective Service Act.

Connecticut as a Defense Production Area

The argument advanced in connection with the farm labor supply problem in Connecticut is that the state has become an arsenal of the national defense program, and that expansion of its industries has, on the one hand, depleted the supply of local farm workers, and, on the other hand, increased the need for farm labor to meet the larger demands upon farmers for milk, eggs, fruits, vegetables, and other farm products for the swollen numbers of industrial workers now in the state. The heightened activity of industrial defense production and its effect on the social economy of the state is suggested in part by a few of the following indices.

Among the 146 localities designated by President Roosevelt as "defense areas" where homes may be financed under new liberalized Federal Housing Administration regulations are the following seven cities or regions in Connecticut: Bridgeport, Bristol, Hartford, Meriden, New Britain, New Haven-Ansonia, New London-Groton-Norwich and Waterbury. Defense orders placed in the State from June 13, 1940, to January 31, 1941, totaled over six hundred million dollars. Almost 40 per cent of these orders have been placed in Hartford County, the heart of the tobacco growing area, and other third in New London County, an important berry, fruit, and vegetable region.

The industrial boom and influx of workers is so extensive as to have reduced housing vacancy in the city of Hartford virtually to zero, and rents are at their highest level. Employment in Hartford County as of April 1 was 164 per cent of the accepted normal as of January 1, 1929; man-hours of work were up 156 per cent of normal, according to a survey of 82 plants by the Hartford County Manufacturers' Association. The general relief load in Hartford, a source of seasonal farm labor, was about 25 per cent less in March, 1941, than at the same time a year ago, stated the State Welfare Commissioner.

Farm Labor Requirements and Seasonality of Major Types of Farming

The major types of commercial farming in Connecticut in which both regular and extra seasonal farm workers are employed are tobacco (shade and sun-grown), dairy, vegetable, potato, fruit and berry and poultry. In contrast to other types of farming, which are generally scattered over the state, tobacco growing is concentrated in a comparatively small geographic area of Connecticut. Its acreage lies predominantly in Hartford County, particularly in those townships bordering the Connecticut River. Potato acreage is less concentrated than tobacco, but a substantial portion of it is found, together with sun-grown tobacco, on the northeast bank of the River in Hartford County. Parts of New Haven and New London Counties are devoted largely to truck vegetable and berry farming and parts of Litchfield County mostly to dairying.

Tobacco plantations are by far the largest employers of both regular and seasonal labor in point of total numbers as well as in terms of average farm-unit hiring. The seasonal labor peak in shade tobacco is particularly high, such employment amounting to about five times the number of regular workers hired during the year. In sun-grown tobacco, the seasonal-regular labor ratio is about three to one. Dairy farms rank second to tobacco in terms of total volume of workers employed, but rank much lower on the basis of average employment per farm-unit. Similarly, the seasonal labor increase on dairy farms as a whole is substantial largely because of the many units in the industry, but it is very small on a per farm-unit basis. Vegetable and fruit and berry farms rank third and fourth, respectively, in terms of total volume employment of hired labor. Fruit farms, however, employ more per farm unit than vegetable farms. Seasonal labor employment on each of these types of farms is comparatively high--4.5 and four times the regular labor requirements, respectively. Potato farms employ considerably less year-round workers than poultry raising enterprises, but the seasonal labor peak on the farmer is much higher than on the latter. The following table shows the estimated total and average per farm-unit employment of regular and seasonal farm laborers by types of commercial farming in Connecticut in 1940:

Type of Farming	No. of Farms	Regular Help	Seasonal Help	Employment per farm unit-regular	Employment per farm unit-seasonal
Shade tobacco	52	1600	8400	30.8	105.4
Havana Seed & Broad Leaf (Sun-grown tobacco)	1150	2760	6700	2.5	5.8
Potatoes	150	300	1250	2.0	8.3
Fruit	500	750	3500	1.5	7.0
Vegetables	1000	1000	4000	1.0	4.0
Poultry	1500	1100	500	0.8	0.3
Dairy	5900	6300	8000	1.1	1.4

The shade-grown tobacco harvesting season commences around July 10, and is completed about September 1. Sun-grown tobacco is cut between the middle of August and September 10, with peak operations falling between August 15 and 25. This year about 6,500 acres have been planted to shade tobacco and about 13,500 acres to the sun-grown variety. The extra seasonal labor requirements for shade-grown tobacco is estimated to be slightly less than 1.5 men to the acre, and for sun-grown, one-half man per acre. This is equivalent to a working force of 8400 in shade tobacco and about 6700 in sun-grown tobacco, or a total seasonal employment in both field harvesting operations and in preliminary-processing work conducted in tobacco barns of slightly over 15,000 workers. Seasonal harvest hands employed in other types of farming have been estimated to number about 1200 in potatoes, 3500 in fruit orchards and berry fields, 4000 in vegetables, 500 in poultry, and about 8000 in dairy farming. This brings the total gross or cumulative employment to about 32,000 man-jobs, or the number which have to be filled for varying periods of employment throughout the agricultural season in the state.

Partial or complete sequence in the maturity of the Connecticut crops, however, permits seasonal employment of part of the labor force in more than one crop or job so that at no time would the maximum 32,000 individual

workers be required. This assumes a fair degree of labor mobility. If we further assume, for example, that from one-third to one-half of the gross or cumulative employment is performed by seasonal farm laborers working in two crops or two farm jobs, it would seem that the maximum number of laborers needed for seasonal work in Connecticut agriculture would range roughly from 24,000 to 27,000. A more careful analysis of seasonal employment of farm laborers particularly as it is reflected in the harvesting operations of each individual crop or farm activity within certain well-defined periods of time during the agricultural season would probably reduce these figures appreciably.

The possibilities which exist for seasonal laborers to capture more than one job during the agricultural season in Connecticut can be roughly illustrated by a recital of the agricultural seasonality in the state. Laborers employed in shade tobacco, for example, are ostensibly free to move over to work in the sun-grown tobacco harvest toward the end of August and continue until about September 10, or to obtain jobs on dairy farms involving silo filling between September 1 and September 15. The apple harvesting period, September 15 to October 10, lends itself also to the employment of workers previously engaged in tobacco work. The harvesting of peaches, August 20 to September 10, and of tomatoes and sweet corn, July 20 to September 20, overlap largely with the tobacco harvest period. But farmers who raise potatoes, which are harvested in October and in early November, are in a position to tap seasonal workers employed in earlier crops. Strawberry farmers who harvest in June find little competition for the local labor supply from other crops, but dairy farms which employ extra seasonal labor between June 20 and August 1, mostly for haying operations, are faced with such competition from the shade tobacco growers. Beans are harvested from the end of June to late September or into October, while most of the other vegetables have a long season starting May 1 and terminating early in September.

The impact of the Farm Labor Shortage on Various Types of Farming

Farm labor shortages, as they may be reflected in absolute scarcity of workers or in the payment of higher wages, do not usually affect all types of farming enterprises with equal intensity. Their acuteness increases in proportion to the volume of workers required per farm unit. This is especially evident when farms employing large numbers of seasonal workers are concentrated in a comparatively small geographic area. The extraordinary heavy demand for short-time seasonal farm hands which such agricultural enterprises make on the local labor markets is frequently greater than they could meet.

This situation has been observed even in normal times when the national economy is operating usually below full capacity. The problem becomes aggravated manifold when the country's economic plant has cause to function, as it has today in a period of national defense, at levels approximating full production and employment. In the present period of great industrial activity, shortages of farm workers for seasonal employment are more keenly felt because of the absorption of part-time, casual, and unemployed workers, many with rural background and farm experience, into industry which offers higher wages, longer tenure of employment and generally better working conditions than does agriculture.

In Connecticut, the case under review, the weight of the farm labor shortage can be expected to fall most heavily and in the first instance upon the shade tobacco growers. As a group, they are the employers of the largest number of seasonal harvest labor, both on a total and per farm-unit scale. Numerically, their plantations are concentrated in a comparatively small geographic area of the state. At the same time, it must be emphasized, these agricultural interests are in a more favorable position to absorb the impact of the farm labor shortage than are those engaged in other types of farming. The shade tobacco and the large outdoor-tobacco growers have, for example, much better access to non-local labor markets than other farmers. A number of these tobacco growers, in fact, have been importing annually since 1916 Negro labor (mostly preparatory school and college students) from the South, and indeed have already made similar preparations for the coming season. Moreover, they are financially competent to out-bid other farmers for the available local labor. Not only are they able to pay higher wages, if necessary, but they can offer greater employment attraction in terms of longer and steadier work and hence higher seasonal earnings. The non-tobacco farmers, however, particularly dairymen and fruit and vegetable farmers, less able to absorb the impact of the farm labor shortage, may be expected to be more keenly disadvantaged in this respect.

The Housing Question in Relation to the Labor Shortage.

The proposal to utilize abandoned or otherwise unoccupied CCC camps for housing non-local farm laborers has, of course, a direct bearing on the general problem of the labor shortage. Particularly, however, it is advanded as a formula for the alleviation of the anticipated labor shortage of those farmers who are least able to absorb its impact. It is precisely the realization of the potential employment-attraction strength of the shade and the large outdoor tobacco farmers that is the governing factor behind the CCC camp proposal, at least in the Connecticut River Valley. To the extent, it is reasoned, that the seasonal labor demand of these agricultural tobacco interests could be

diverted from the strictly local or even non-local intra-state labor markets, the greater the opportunities of other types of farmers to successfully tap the local labor reservoirs the coming season. But a successful and substantial diversion of the seasonal labor demand of the tobacco growers from local to remote labor sources can be achieved only by overcoming the major obstacle standing in the way--namely, the absence of sufficient housing. Housing facilities which tobacco growers at present can offer to out-of-state or other non-local farm laborers are extremely limited, and, it can be conceded, without additional accommodations the influx of such labor would be materially curtailed. The use of an unoccupied CCC camp in the Connecticut Valley is advanced, in the last analysis, as a lever capable of alleviating the farm-labor shortage condition affecting non-tobacco farmers by enabling the tobacco farmers to increase their ability to import or to employ imported out-of-state or other non-local labor.

The Problem of Housing Non-Local Workers

If the employment of non-local or migratory seasonal farm workers on a larger scale than heretofore becomes necessary this coming season in Connecticut agriculture, as it seems it would, the largest employers of such labor will undoubtedly be the shade tobacco growers and the large outdoor tobacco farmers. There is ample evidence, both current and historical, to support this prediction. If this is done, and assuming no expansion of housing facilities, their labor shortages will be overcome only at the expense of the housing, health, and living conditions of such workers. Thus, conditions similar to those which developed in the last World War will be repeated. At that time the importation of about 2000 laborers (practically all Negroes) from New York, Boston, and from the South, created housing and health problems which bordered on a public scandal. Workers were housed in every conceivable shelter, ranging from cellars to tobacco barns.

Today, as in 1916, there are comparatively few tobacco growers who have sufficient and adequate facilities to house any substantial numbers of non-local laborers. This deficiency will be aggravated, of course, if greater numbers of non-local workers are employed this year than in the past. At present, perhaps a third to one-half of the tobacco growers have houses or shelters which fairly adequately accommodate comparatively small numbers of such workers. No more than 25 per cent of the total number of all seasonal workers are usually housed by tobacco growers in dwellings provided by them either directly or through arrangements with persons conducting boarding houses or taking in roomers. It is doubtful whether more than one out of 10 of these growers are in a position to provide adequate housing with the

facilities at hand, if the total or per plantation ratio of non-local seasonal to local seasonal labor is increased materially over 25 per cent.

Only a handful of tobacco growers are now prepared to meet such an emergency. Indeed, one of them purchased a few years ago the facilities of an abandoned Civilian Conservation Corps Camp accommodating about 200 persons. Last year, this shade tobacco grower housed in this camp about 70 workers, mostly Negro students and single men from the South, using the rest of the facilities for storage and other purposes.

On the other hand, dairy farmers who as a group also employ large numbers of seasonal hands are usually able to house such workers in their own homes because individually they hire only one or two extras at the peak of operations. They could accommodate such workers, however, only if they are white and of a reasonably high moral character. The other types of farming enterprises in the state have had no experience, for the most part, in housing seasonal agricultural workers, and indeed have had no occasion to do so in the past. It is extremely doubtful whether many of them are prepared to day to provide housing for non-local seasonal labor.

Action Taken to Offset Local Labor Shortages

The State Agricultural Defense Council and its sub-committee on farm labor has been operating on two broad fronts in their efforts to tap sources of farm labor for the coming cropping season: the local-state and the out-of-state labor markets.

At the request of the sub-committee, the State Department of Education over the Commissioner's signature has mailed letters to principals of high and vocational schools, to headmasters of preparatory schools, and to presidents of a number of colleges in Connecticut, requesting them to canvass their student bodies with regard to the question of willingness to work on farms during the coming season. Estimates indicate there are about 40,000 to 50,000 high school boys over 14 years of age and about 8,000 college boys in the state. Following this preliminary canvass, the State Employment Service is expected to follow up with a registration effort by providing cards to be filled out by students willing and able to accept such employment. These registration cards are to be collected by the State local employment offices, and a farm-labor registry established. This job was planned to be completed by the end of April.

The sub-committee is counting more heavily on this potential source of seasonal labor than on any other. Most of the non-tobacco farmers have indicated their willingness to hire youth-labor where adult-labor is not available. To tobacco growers, particularly the "shade-men", the employment of youth-labor is not a novelty. They have had long experience with it, and in fact prefer it because it lends itself far better to harvesting operations (picking tobacco leaves under large "tents") than adult-labor.

In addition, the State Employment Service has agreed to expand generally their farm placement activities in the state, particularly in such major potential labor reservoirs as Hartford, New Haven, New Britain, and Bristol. It is planned also to examine the potential farm labor supply among those enrolled in NYA, WPA, and rural and non-rural defense training centers for out-of-school youth. The Out-door Aid Division of the Department of Public Welfare of Hartford also has been canvassed, and has already submitted to tobacco growers a list of 150 of its inmates at Camp Nehantic, Oakdale, Connecticut, for possible employment in the harvest. The old-age composition of this group, however, reduces the value of this labor source.

In connection with recruiting out-of-state labor, the Agricultural Defense Council, through its sub-committee, has submitted to the Connecticut State Employment Service a list of 37 Negro educational institutions to be forwarded to State Employment Services in several of the southern states for the purpose of canvassing the labor supply available among the students of these institutions. Young men between the ages of 17 and 25 will be preferred. It is reported that the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People has endorsed this project.

The recruiting of student-labor from southern educational institutions for the tobacco fields of Connecticut dates back to the spring of 1916. At that time, shortages of local labor for harvesting operations led the Shade Tobacco Growers Association to hire a special agent to canvass outside sources of farm laborers. The undertaking was directed by a man named John Luddy, and the organization which he set up was well financed. It is estimated that about $25,000 was expended for the work which was generally considered a success. The recruiting operations were conducted from the city of Hartford, but agents were stationed in New York, Boston, and in a number of cities in the South. Preliminary contacts and public relations work including, in the case of the educational institutions in the South, the presentation of the case before student and faculty bodies, preceded the mechanical operations carried through by the local recruiting agents.

About 2,000 workers, practically all unattached male Negroes, were ultimately imported for work in the tobacco harvest. It is estimated that about one-third came from Negro preparatory schools and colleges of the South, a smaller proportion from Boston and the majority, from the Negro residential sections of New York City. Transportation costs were advanced by the Association, but later deducted from wages in sufficient amounts not only to repay the advance but also to insure their ability to return to their place of origin after the completion of the harvest.

It is alleged that recruiting was custom-made and on order, and no indiscriminate or blind recruiting characterized the operations. Nor was a surplus of migrant workers brought in. All transportation arrangements including the designation of the time and place of departure, the fixing of the hour and point of arrival, accommodations en route, reception on arrival, and subsequent placement on designated farms were planned in advance. Hired agents usually accompanied the workers on the train or bus to insure their arrival. Student-laborers from the South were generally escorted by a member of the faculty of the school from which they came or by an older student who acted in the capacity of an adviser. Although a number of workers deserted en route or after arrival, the operations were deemed generally successful.

It is the consensus of the agricultural interests of the state that the influx of this migrant labor in the spring of 1916 relieved the labor shortage not only for the shade tobacco growers for whom the plan was designed, but also for the outdoor tobacco growers whose harvesting season partly dove-tails with that of the shade growers, and who therefore had access to it after its release at the culmination of the shade tobacco season. Indirect beneficiaries of this movement, it is said, were other types of farming enterprises requiring extra seasonal farm laborers who became more accessible largely because of the additional supply of migrant workers who were imported. This, of course, is not a disinterested view, and leaves the impression that the whole affair made everybody happy. It is not unfair to suggest that there is a possibility, although no proof, that the local population usually engaged in farm work during the summer may have been adversely affected in terms of wages and employment opportunity by the influx of the migrants.

The migratory farm-labor movement into Connecticut during the last war produced at least three known undesirable results: (a) it established a precedent for this influx; (b) it caused an acute housing shortage on the tobacco plantations; and (c) it left an unemployed and partly destitute segment of these migrants as a relief burden on the city of Hartford where many of them settled permanently instead of returning home after the agricultural season. In fact, a substantial portion of the present Negro population in this city is composed of those migrants who did not return home in 1916 and who later brought their families to join them.

The difference between the migrant recruiting effort during the last war and that contemplated presently, in 1941, is that whereas in 1916 the movement was launched, financed, and carried through by and for one group of farming interests, the shade tobacco growers, the current

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It is the conference of the agricultural interests of the state that
the influx of this migrant labor in the opinion of this relieved the
labor shortage not only for the sugar growers for whom the
plan was designed, but also for the outdoor tobacco growers whose
harvesting season partly dovetails with that of the sugar growers,
and who therefore had access to it after its release at the conclusion
of the sugar tobacco season. Different beneficiaries of this
movement, it is said, were other types of farming enterprises requir-
ing extra seasonal farm laborers who became more accessible directly
because of the additional supply of migrant workers who were imported.
This, of course, is not a disinterested view, and leaves the impres-
sion that the whole affair was everybody happy. It is not unfair to
suggest that there is a possibility, without so proof, that the local
population usually engaged in farm work during the summer may have
been adversely affected in terms of wages and employment opportunity
by the influx of the migrants.

The experiment of farm-labor movement into Connecticut during the last war
produced at least three demonstrable results: (a) it established
a precedent for this influx; (b) it caused an acute housing shortage
on the tobacco plantations; and (c) it left an unemployed and partly
destitute remnant of these migrants as a relief burden on the city of
Hartford after many of them realized unexpectedly instead of returning
home after the agricultural season. In fact, a substantial portion
of the present large population in this city is composed of those
migrants who did not return home in 1918 and who later brought their
families to join them.

The difference between the migrant recruiting effort during the last
war and that contemplated presently, in 1941, is that whereas in 1918
the government was launched, financed, and carried through by and for
the group of farming interests, the state subsidy program, the current

one has no such origin nor backing. In fact the prime movers in the last war are today in the background with respect to the current plans of the State sub-committee on farm labor to import out-of-state farm labor into Connecticut. The reason for this attitude is evident. The shade tobacco growers are capitalizing on the contacts made and the experience gained in 1916. Since that time they have been recruiting southern student-labor, among other types, on an independent and individual basis, and many of these growers have already made similar arrangements for the coming season.

The sub-committee on farm labor, which has undertaken the task this year, and, indeed, has made preliminary arrangements along this line, represents no single group of farmers as, for example, the Shade Tobacco Growers Association did in 1916. Ostensibly, they represent the entire agricultural community of the state. The mechanics of its effort in this direction have not been well defined as yet, but it is believed that the State Employment Service will perform the essential work of its 1916 counterpart, the Shade Tobacco Growers Association.

There are serious doubts, however, whether this government agency is now equipped with sufficient personnel and funds to carry through this project on a scale adopted by the Shade Tobacco Growers Association in the last war. If adequately staffed, the public employment services of the various states working cooperatively, however, could perform this service far more competently and efficiently than any privately operated labor recruiting organization. Moreover, as public service agencies they will probably be rightfully reluctant to undertake this operation unless certain prior conditions exist. The Connecticut State Employment Service and the State Department of Labor have already taken the position that they will not be a party to the importation of out-of-state farm migrants unless housing facilities are adequate for these laborers and unless reasonable guarantees are established to return them to their place of origin after the season is over and their usefulness is past.

These government agencies have already made a public issue of the working and living conditions of the Negro migrants employed annually by some of the tobacco growers in the Connecticut River Valley. Estimates show that about 700 of these farm laborers were brought into this region in 1940. A review of the 1940 working and living conditions on Connecticut shade tobacco plantations and the employment standards voluntarily agreed upon between the tobacco growers and the State Department of Labor are attached to this memorandum.

FSA and the Problem of Farm Labor Shortage

In this, as in other similar cases, the central point of intersection of the problem of farm labor shortages and the sphere of interest of the Farm Security Administration in this problem is the question of farm labor housing. If and when non-locally resident seasonal farm workers are recruited for employment as a device for overcoming a shortage of such labor in the immediate and surrounding communities, the absence of needed housing facilities for them becomes invariably manifest, and looms up as a problem second only to the scarcity of local farm labor itself. Such is the case in this present instance.

With the possible exception of employment on tabacco farms, housing for seasonal farm labor in Connecticut normally does not create a serious problem. On dairy farms and on some of the others, such workers are housed on the farm, usually with the farm family. On larger farms, particularly those growing tobacco, harvest laborers are recruited, for the most part, from neighboring urban areas and trucked to and from work. A shortage of local farm labor, however, contains the seeds of a housing problem, particularly on the large tobacco farms in the Connecticut Valley where the employment of seasonal labor is most highly concentrated.

If the tobacco growers, particularly the "shade" men, are unable to obtain local labor, they will draw it from much wider areas than heretofore, even from beyond the borders of the state. The result of such a step will unquestionably aggravate their housing problem, a condition for which in the past they had been taken to task by the State Department of Labor. On the other hand, it is extremely unlikely that non-tobacco commercial farmers will have this recourse to outside labor, for they do not possess the equivalent employment attraction of tobacco work in terms of wages and length of employment.

The Connecticut sub-committee on farm labor has outlined a comprehensive plan, attached to this memorandum, of meeting the farm labor shortage problems. Among the proposals, it will be noted, is one recommending the use of one or more abandoned or otherwise unoccupied CCC camps for the purpose of housing non-local or migratory workers who would not be able to return to their homes after the day's work without great loss of time and inconvenience. It is not inaccurate to interpret the motive behind this proposal as one primarily designed as an incentive to attract non-local residents to the needed performance of farm work. The improved housing that such a camp would provide is incidental, but nevertheless noteworthy.

The sub-committee is reasonably certain that it can obtain, for the purpose mentioned, one or more CCC camps. It has requested the Farm Security Administration to provide a camp manager and a health clinic for any camp or camps which the CCC officials may consent to turn over for this purpose. To what extent FSA participation in this phase of the program would increase the chances of the effort to obtain such a camp or camps is not known. That it will have this effect as well as prove helpful in attracting outside labor can be reasonably assumed.

It is clear that for a CCC camp to be of maximum use in the manner contemplated it should be located in or near an area in which substantial numbers of non-local seasonal farm laborers have been or can be employed with some success to the operations involved, and with some benefit to the workers. In Connecticut only one area meets these requirements--the Connecticut River Valley. Camp Connors in Summers township, Tolland County, is conveniently located for this purpose. This CCC camp has sufficient buildings to house about 300 workers and an adequate area nearby to put up many tents on platforms if expansion proves necessary. Other buildings for administrative use, health facilities, eating, and recreation are also available.

The camp will be free for occupancy on or about June 1, and is capable of serving the tobacco growers and the potato and potato-tobacco combination farms in the Valley. Recent information received by this office makes it appear, unfortunately, that the consummation of the plan awaits the decision of the Farm Security Administration even though the latter has made no commitments of any kind in this direction during or following the reconnaissance of the undersigned in the Connecticut Valley.

The use of the CCC Camp Connors, located in the northeastern section of the Connecticut Valley, appears to have advantages in the light of the present emergency. The fact that the direct benefits of the camp will accrue to the tobacco farmers (particularly the shade tobacco growers), the most financially competent group of agricultural interests in the state who can well afford to construct special quarters for non-local workers, can be overlooked--at least in this period of national defense. However, unless the outside laborers for whom the camp is intended are recruited, directed, transported, and placed on farms in a systematic and rational manner, which only a fully staffed State Employment Service devoting the necessary time and energy to the task can accomplish, the entire scheme is capable of leading to much abuse--especially if out-of-state labor is imported.

Several factors have a direct bearing on the position which the Farm Security Administration is requested to assume. First, the problems associated with physical facilities and of management of such a camp are formidable. There is considerable doubt that the Civilian Conservation Corps officials will leave the physical and movable equipment intact when they withdraw their jurisdiction. Information available points to the fact that CCC officials plan practically to strip the camp by removing the cots in the barracks, cooking facilities, water pump, and perhaps a number of other items of equipment. It is not quite clear where the replacements, if any, will come from. Second, it appears that the composition of the population of the camp will be heterogeneous with respect to age, race, and sex groups. It is planned to house southern unattached Negro-student and perhaps adult-Negro labor, white young boys of high school and college age, perhaps young girls, and even families. Housing young unattached boys or girls between 16 (or younger) and 18 years of age presents management problems not present in the migratory farm-family labor camps now in operation by the Farm Security Administration. Nor is there anybody of experience upon which the FSA could lean in regulating the social, economic, recreational, and disciplinary activities of such a heterogeneous young and unattached group of workers. Third, the FSA is not given authority to establish the basis of eligibility for admission to the camp, but apparently is to throw open the doors to all comers. What hazards of management and abuses of operation may result from this lack of authority can only be surmised. At any rate, it is difficult not to come to the conclusion that the Farm Security Administration is asked to assume full obligations of management without the power to shape the physical environment nor determine the character of the camp's population--both of which are essential prerequisites for successful operation of such an enterprise.

Finally, the question arises whether the FSA has legislative authority to undertake the task at hand, and if so, whether funds are available for this purpose. The policy of the Farm Security Administration in connection with its migratory farm labor program is to construct camps for migratory farm laborers who annually are known to visit agricultural areas in large numbers, but who cannot find adequate housing during their comparatively short stay in such regions. The Administration has attempted to meet problems arising from agricultural migration, but it has not been a party in recruiting or helping to recruit seasonal migratory farm laborers. Unless we are ready to revise this policy--in the light of the present emergency and in anticipation of the 1942 situation--the FSA does not seem to be in a position to meet the character of requests herein proposed.

Accordingly, it would seem advisable, at this time, not to commit the Farm Security Administration in any material way to the current proposition. It would seem desirable, however, once the undertaking is decided upon, to offer our assistance in a consultative and advisory capacity. An early meeting with the members of the Connecticut sub-committee on farm labor is hereby recommended.

Sincerely yours,

Samuel Liss
Labor Division

Appendix A

CONNECTICUT FARM LABOR SURVEY

Name_____ Address_____

1. Type of farm: No. Cows___; No. Hens___, Vegetable, acres___; Tobacco, acres_____; Potato, acres___; Orchard, acres___; Other_____

2. Amount of labor employed on farm last year:
   (a) Regular or yearly: No._____
   (b) Seasonal Labor:
   No.___From_____to_____Job_____
   No.___From_____to_____Job_____
   No.___From_____to_____Job_____

3. Have you lost help?__To industry-No.__To draft-No.__Help in draft class I_____
   Have you been able to replace help lost?_____
   Would you hire help now if you could get it?____No.____Type_____

4. Are you going to need help this coming spring, summer and fall?_____
   (a) Regular help: No.____From_____to_____Job_____
   (b) Seasonal help: No.____From_____to_____Job_____
   No.____From_____to_____Job_____
   No.____From_____to_____Job_____

5. If men not available:
   Could you use boys: Age____No____From_____to_____
   Women or girls: Age____No____From_____to_____
   Could you use men in gangs of 5 or more? No._____From_____to_____
   Women or girls in gangs of 5 or more? No._____From_____to_____

Date_____ Checker_____

Use back of card for comment.

Appendix B

RECOMMENDATIONS OF LABOR COMMITTEE OF CONNECTICUT
AGRICULTURAL DEFENSE COUNCIL FOR AGRICULTURAL
LABOR REGISTRY

(4/2/41)

The following recommendations are made by the Labor Committee of the Agricultural Defense Council after careful study. In view of the rapidly developing agricultural labor emergency, we request that the agencies, institutions and organizations, hereafter mentioned, endorse the program and take immediate steps to carry out their part.

A. The State Employment Service is requested:

1. a. To expand the farm placement department with special interviewers in local offices.
   b. To provide adequate secretarial and filing clerks in both local and state offices to handle additional work.

2. To develop an agricultural file to include, in addition to present registrants, those available for farm labor from:
   a. A Farm Labor Registry of students from high schools, preparatory schools, and colleges.
   b. An Agricultural selected registry of NYA, CCC, and WPA personnel.
   c. A selected registry of the rural and non-rural out of school youth defense training classes.
   d. Registration of female labor in large cities and nearby towns.

3. a. To arrange clearance of available agricultural labor from New England and nearby states at once.
   b. To contact southern State Employment Services to develop the possibilities of bringing up groups of students from southern Negro colleges and other Negro educational institutions.

B. The Commissioner of Education, Dr. Grace, Labor Commissioner Danaher, and Vocational Agricultural Supervisor Huhn are asked to cooperate so that:

1. Articles stating the purpose of the High School Agricultural Defense Labor Registry shall be published in newspapers under auspices of the Labor Commissioner. The same article shall be published in the monthly letter of the Commissioner of Education to the Superintendent of Schools

2. A letter signed by the Commissioner of Education, stating the purpose of the High School Agricultural Defense Labor Registry with be directed to the attention of all High School Principals.

3. Registration of high school students should be started on special farm registration cards according to instructions and in a manner acceptable to the Department of Education.

C. Colleges and Prep Schools - The Committee seeks the cooperation of college presidents and prep school headmasters in Connecticut to secure registration of their students for agricultural defense labor.

1. If deemed advisable a committee may be organized representing these schools to develop the project.

2. A small list of persons may be established who could go to such colleges and schools and speak before the student body if the heads of these institutions requested such presentation of the problem.

3. Registration cards are to be similar to those used in the high school group.

4. It will be ascertained whether or not it would be possible to house the workers in groups in centrally located dormitories of such institutions providing proper arrangements would be worked out for supervision and board of such students in the dormitories.

D. The National Youth Administration is requested:

1. To have all project supervisors present the emergency of the farm labor problem to all project workers and to make an effort to enroll boys for agricultural labor. These enrollees to be divided into two groups:

   a. Those willing to register for full-time farm work

   b. Those desiring to continue work in the NYA program but willing to work on farms for short periods either a few days a week, or other irregular seasonal jobs.

2. To turn over such lists to the State Employment Service together with the names and proper means of contacting in regard to this enrollment.

E. The Civilian Conservation Corps is requested:

1. To arrange for the use of CCC camps or barracks for housing school, college and migratory labor, with the understanding that the Farm Security Administration or some other organization will furnish satisfactory management, supervision and health regulations.

2. To consider requests for the use of CCC camps, particularly Somers in Somers, Robinson in East Hartland and joint use, with Massachusetts, of the camp in Reading Hills, for housing farm labor.

3. To determine the number of CCC members available for agricultural defense labor. The serious farm labor problem should be presented at all camps in the state, and an effort be made to enroll CCC boys for farm labor.

F. The Work Projects Administration is requested:

1. To determine the number on the rolls available for agricultural defense labor together with the listing of the same with the State Employment Service.

G. This Committee also recommends:

1. A registry of enrollees in the rural and non-rural out of school youth defense training classes conducted under the auspices of the Connecticut State Department of Education.

2. Registration of female labor in large cities and near the area of tobacco production.

H. To have all labor available for agricultural purposes be registered with the State Employment Service.

Appendix C

WORKING AND LIVING CONDITIONS ON SHADE TOBACCO PLANTATIONS

SUMMER, 1940

In August of this year representatives of the Department of Labor and a representative of the Consumer's League of Massachusetts visited twenty seven plantations, representing sixteen growers, to investigate working and living conditions and the observance of the shade growers' agreement not to employ children under 14 years of age.

Child Labor At the suggestion of the Department of Labor, the state Board of Education sent letters to school authorities in 18 towns and cities, requesting them to announce, before the close of school, that certificates of age would be issued to children 14 years of age and over for work on the tobacco fields. Approximately 550 applications were received and 354 certificates issued to children who had secured work. As a result of this cooperation 128 certificates were found on file on the fields. On many plantations certificates had been requested and returned to children. Thirteen children 13 years of age and two 12 years were working on plantations visited. On every field but one there were children of doubtful age who had not been asked for certificates. It was evident that the general practice was to request proof of age only when children appeared to be under 14 years of age.

Leaves On all but one field women received $1.00 for sewing 3 bundles of leaves. On one, the rate was 90¢ with 5¢ extra for each bundle if worker remained to end of season. There are usually 20 and 22 rains of leaves to a lath and 50 laths constitute a bundle. The average experienced [illegible] sewed 7 and 8 bundles a day. Leaf girls were paid by the day as follows: on 3 fields, $1.50 and $1.75, on eight fields, $1.75 and $2.00, and on ten fields $2.00 and $2.25. The younger boys, engaged in picking, received $1.75 to $2.25 a day. The rate for older boys, employed mostly at hauling, was from $2.00 to $2.75 a day.

Hours All fields were operating on a full 6 day week; 10 had a scheduled 9½-hour day and 57-hour week and 17, a 9-hour day and 54-hour week.

Management and Labor Force Approximately 2,200 males and 1,400 women and girls, the majority white persons, were employed. In addition there were 257 male negroes brought from the South for the season.

Transportation On the majority of fields workers were transported in Company owned and operated trucks and were picked up from 5:45 to 6:30 o'clock in the morning at central points in cities and towns. Some growers transported boys and girls separately. On one field the trucks were equipped with governors limiting the speed to 30 miles an hour.

Working Conditions An improvement in the number and condition of privies was found. There were more portable ones and an appreciable number were supplied with toilet tissue in holders. However, the old failure to provide separate privies for men and women was present and many privies were found at too great a distance from the sheds for convenient use. On two fields there were no privies at all, on nine, one for women only and ten provided a privy for each sex.

No improvement in drinking facilities was evident. On none fields the common dipper was in use, subjecting the worker to danger of infection, seven fields supplied containers with faucets or unguarded, inverted snuggers but no drinking cups and six had containers with faucets and paper cups.

Small, sdequately equipped first aid kits were found on fourteen fields. Most of the others had none. A few offered a dusty, loosely covered, tin box containing exposed cotton and an antiseptic.

Living Conditions Twelve company owned and operated boarding houses and three company owned private dwellings with boarders were visited. Conditions differed little from those existing in 1938. There was, however, a noticeable decrease in the number of children being housed in private dwellings, where, in previous years, the most shocking conditions were found.

In three boarding houses for white males the board ranged from $6.50 to $7.00 weekly for three meals a day and a room usually shared with one or two others. Two boarding houses were for both male and female workers. In one, boys and girls lived in the same building. In both, $1.25 a week was the charge for bed and coffee served three times daily. Although there were cooking facilities and refrigeration, no attempt had been made to serve at least one hot meal a day to the young workers. Bread, crackers and canned foods, kept in sleeping quarters, constituted their daily fare. The inability of these children to get fresh vegetables in the few, small stores of the vicinity and to secure refrigeration for milk and meat is still a matter of the gravest concern.

In one company owned private dwelling for girls the weekly board was $1.00 for bed and coffee and in another boys were charged $1.50. There were the usual attendant fire hazards, crowding, lack of washing and bathing facilities and old, foul smelling privies shared with several other families. One had no refrigeration and the other an old-fashioned ice box apparently not in use.

Six company boarding houses were for colored males. One, a former CCC Camp, was by far the most desirable. Here $4.00 weekly was charged for bed and three meals a day. The entire camp was electrified. In five others there was no charge for bed and the men pooled the weekly food costs which

ranged from $2.50 to $3.50 per person. The old, frame buildings were fire traps. In two, men slept in a small, third floor attic reached by only a narrow wooden stairway. Bedding was worn, dirty and inadequate.

In all but two Company boarding houses, both white and colored, the only washing and bathing facilities consisted of a few faucets in an outshed and an improvised, one-shower spray. The men in one colored boarding house were required to get water from a nearby seed bed hose or from a pump some 200 yards distant.

Model Boarding house. In 1938 one company built a large, two story boarding house for white males which serves as an example of what can be done toward a better standard of living on our tobacco plantations. Each of the thirty eight single rooms contained a single bed, large dresser and alcove clothes closet. The bedding was clean and adequate. Off each of the two, large, comfortably furnished living rooms was a screened porch of almost the same size. There were three exits by stairway and a fire extinguisher on each floor. In the basement were toilets, tiled wash sinks and showers, hot and cold water. The modern dining room and kitchen in an adjoining building, served company officials and office workers as well as boarders.

Appendix D

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

Cornelius J. Danaher
Commissioner

Department of Labor and Factory Inspection
Unemployment Compensation
Connecticut State Employment Service
Hartford

At a conference of the tobacco growers of Connecticut, called by this Department and held at the State Capitol in Hartford, on May 21st, 1940, to which you were invited, the enclosed list of employment standards was agreed upon as desirable by those representatives of the industry present and members of this Department.

We regret you were not present at this conference and request that you consider these standards adopted and inform us as soon as possible whether they are acceptable to you.

A representative of this Department, familiar with the problems of employment on our tobacco plantations, will be glad to call and discuss these standards with you.

Cordially yours,

(signed) Cornelius J. Danaher

Cornelius J. Danaher
COMMISSIONER

CJD/cr

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS
AGREED UPON IN CONFERENCE OF CONNECTICUT TOBACCO GROWERS
AND CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
HELD AT HARTFORD, MAY 21ST, 1940

1. Age certificates for all children of doubtful age.
(Through the state board of education, announcement will be made in the schools to the effect that certification of age may be secured by all children between the ages of 14 and 16 years desiring employment on the tobacco fields this summer.)

2. Housing.
   a. Agreement on certain basic standards for all company and private boarding houses.
      (1) No over crowding - adequate privacy
      (2) Cleanliness.
      (3) All windows screened; outside ventilation for every sleeping room.
      (4) Reasonably adequate beds and bedding.
      (5) Two exits should be provided for persons sleeping above the second floor.
      (6) Male and female boarders not to live in same building. Separate privies for men and women.
      (7) Where employees provide own meals, refrigeration should be provided for their supplies.
   b. In company boarding houses one hearty, cooked meal per day with fresh milk should be made available.
   c. Registration by a central agent on each plantation, of the name of each employee who boards in the vicinity and of the name and address of his or her boarding place; the registrations to be open to some central authority who will inspect boarding places.

3. Field.
   a. Water-should be readily available to both shed and field workers, in covered containers with sanitary tumblers or paper cups.
   b. Safety kit - should be kept in every shed where work is going on.
   c. Privies - separate for men and women, locked, provided with locks and toilet paper, kept clean, not too far from work places.

4. Transportation. The excellent regulations regarding transportation should be followed more generally.

5. Administration. On each plantation one man should be designated by the company to see that all labor regulations are carried out, and should be fully advised of any labor regulations adopted by the growers.